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The popular folk tale explains why there are differences in the night of Amazigh new year. The late return of the Pharaoh and his soldiers from battle. The celebration was supposed to be on the 12th day, but was postponed to the 13th day due to their absence and that is why the 13th day celebrations still remain in effect to this day.

What can be agreed throughout Tamzgha on is that the celebration begins on the 12th and ends on the 14th. The 13th day is the last day of the Amazigh calendar year, and the 14th is considered (without a doubt) the first day of the Amazigh year.

The New Year celebrations differ from place to place, reflecting the unique differences each region of Tamzgha has. The celebrations are based around the importance of the land and farming traditions.

Simple calculation

By using a simple equation, we can calculate the Amazigh calendar.
(Gregorian Calendar + 950 years) - 13 days = the Amazigh Calendar is born.

3 Days of Rest

Traditionally, it is customary to abstain from work and labor during the three days of Amazigh New Year. Many Amazigh Associations have been advocating for the 14th day to be recognized as an official holiday (paid) by the government, similar to the rest of the officially recognized holidays.



A Branch Above the Door

A freshly cut branch is placed above doors or on the roof tops of the house. In areas where palm trees flourish, people often use a palm branch because it remains green throughout the year. This is done to ensure a blessed year and good harvest.

The Date Pit



The pits of dates are used across north Africa to symbolize good luck among family members. A date pit is placed/hidden in traditional foods such as "Timeghtal" or "Tarwayt." The person who finds the pit will have great luck throughout the year and is called "Amnazz" (Lucky). In some Amazigh areas in the south of Morocco, such as Zagoura, they garnish the date pit in a very artistic way.

According to an old saying, the one who finds the date pit will have a rich harvest, and the one who finds the piece of fat will have a great flock of sheep.

Another proverb passed down from our ancestors states that dates should not be eaten on New Year's Eve to ensure the next year would be fruitful and blessed.

A Prosperous Year

Most of the world calendars started as a farming calendar. At first it was a very primitive way to divide the year into four seasons, then into months, weeks and days. The main purpose was to know the plowing and harvest season and the Amazigh calendar is no exception. While other calendars place importance on religious significance, the Amazigh calendar still places a high importance on the land and farming traditions.

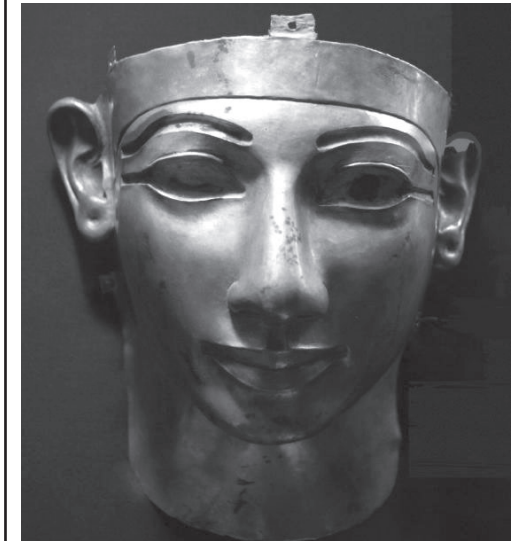
The Amazigh New Year Celebration traditionally show gratitude for the last harvest and ask for blessings in the upcoming year. This section will explain the traditions that revolve around family and community collaboration.

There are two points that need to be mentioned. First, the celebration of Amazigh New Year and its traditions are as ancient as the Amazigh culture itself. Second, the connection between Pharaoh Sheshonq (or other pharaoh/kings) is not essential to the Amazigh New Year celebrations. The celebration of the New Year itself is the main focus.

A key part of Amazigh culture (similar to many other cultures) is the foundation of folk tales and legends. One legend that revolves around the Amazigh New Year is the legend of Great King Barau.

Although there is much debate about who was this King Barau, researchers have discovered that the name "Barhou" sounds extremely similar to the ancient Egyptian word for "Pharaoh." Additionally, it just so happens that the Amazigh New Year's Eve is known as, "Idh n Pharaoh," or "The Night of the Pharaoh."

The interesting thing about folk stories is that they seldom die out, rather they just change form depending on the civil society of the story tellers. For example, some listen to the story of King Barhou, but hear the story of Moses. Due to the ever changing nature of oral stories, which are affected by other religions, it was popular belief that it was the birth of the Pharaoh Moses.



On the Footsteps of king BARAU

Sociologist, Ammar Nqaddi, has continuously linked the Amazigh calendar with the Amazigh Pharaoh Sheshonq, who ascended the Egyptian throne in 950 BC. After his previous studies of the topic, he carefully collected all of the popular folk stories and found that the closest Pharaoh that the Amazigh people should celebrate is Pharaoh Sheshonq and since then the Amazigh calendar was based on him.

Happy new Year

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°0:XX°0 N °CII°X
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Below are just a few of many different greetings for the Amazigh New Year.

To Start, "Asuggas" means "Year,"

Asuggas Ameggaz, Agaz is related to the root G.Z that mean protection and preservation "Taggazt". also means God's watching , with that explanation we wish you a year of protection and God's care.

Asuggas Amnaz, amnaz is related to the root N.Z. which means Good luck and fortune. so with that wishing everyone the Good fortune.

Asuggas Anmmar, Nmr is related to the root N.M.R and the word Tanemmirt a blessing, with that we wish you a year filled with thanks and blessings.

Asuggas Ighodan, ighodan is related to the root GH.W.D.W that mean good or glorious , with that we wish you a good and glorious year.

The harvest of goodness and blessings

Three stones represent the three days of celebration, our elders change the "kuken" or stove's stone, each day for three days to start the renewal of the kitchen. After the changing of the stone on the twelfth day, the kitchen and/or stove area is painted with lime or white gypsum. By this day, all of the work must be finished by the elders, even if they asked for help "Awwas" from the other tribe members. They also make new pots and in some area they even prepare the food related to the celebration before the 12th day.

Although there is much food diversity throughout the Tamazgha region, as far as what produce is available, the common denominator is Couscous. The most common food is seven vegetable couscous made with whatever local vegetables are available. Although some people add chicken to their couscous, the majority prefer the traditional vegetarian version.

Custom dictates that some couscous must be placed next to the doors, in corners of the home, and around the stove in order to ask for blessings. A lucky date pit with Amazigh decorations is placed with the couscous. We also find the same thing for the dinner of Orkimen or Timghtal, "Sereal meal" is a soup similar to Harira mixed with available vegetables. This also brings the good luck or "Annaz."

With every meal, they put a dish of "Inuda," which is a dish of different kinds

of nuts and dried fruits from that particular area, then Tighwaw is prepared which we find everywhere in Tamazgha also.

In some areas children participate in "Tasuslt," which is an occasion of giving to prevent the poor from feeling the need to beg. In other areas, charity is collected and placed at night in front of mosques. At dawn, the poor go to the mosque and take what they need without knowing who placed it there.



tarwayt/tagulla

On the morning of the thirteenth, another stove stone is changed, afterwards "Tarwayt" is cooked using small amounts of the past year's harvest of barley and wheat. It's served with either date paste, or honey and butter. Another date pit is hidden within the dish to be found. Some replace "Tarwayt" with "Tighrifin," which is a delicious small pastry served with honey and butter.

Couscous, similar to the one made the first day, is made for lunch. No food should

be left on the plate that day. Parents make sure their children get their full of the meal, in order to prevent drought in the upcoming year.



timghtal/tiremin

The main dinner meal for the New Year is called "Timghtal," Sereal, which is eaten with "Tisaqqar" dried meat, sometimes with lamb shoulder and eggs. And of course, the lucky date pit is hidden in the dish.

People celebrate late into the night on this day, remembering the past year, singing and dancing to the rhythm of the music and reciting poetry all night long.

On the fourteenth (the last day of celebration and the first day of the new the year) the last stone is changed and new pots replace the old ones. In some areas, everything old is replaced in order to welcome the New Year.